

Synopsis Paper

Education and stability

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Classroom at school
in Foro Baranga,
West Darfur, Sudan.

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Introduction

DFID are aware that there are strong connections between education and stability which have implications for programming in different country contexts. Fifty-seven percent of the total DFID ODA spend, and 93% of bilateral ODA spend, has been allocated to fragile states and regions since 2017 with a long-term goal of supporting the peaceful management of change.

A growing body of research in this area confirms the “two faces of education in conflict,”¹ i.e. the fact that education can both mitigate and exacerbate conflict. Until recently, this mainly concerned primary and secondary education, but there is a new recognition of the potential for universities to play a significant role in conflict mobilisation, conflict response and conflict recovery. The relationship is, however, complex and context dependent, affected by a number of key factors. For example, while much research shows that education has an overall pacifying effect on conflict, there is also

evidence of above-average levels of education among terrorists and genocide perpetrators.²

There is also no “one size fits all” solution, but several important factors to be aware of. Education can contribute to divisiveness, as unequal access to education can add to the societal injustice underlying conflict and politicised curricula can cause indoctrination and negative stereotypes. However, education can also contribute to social cohesion, inclusive identities and reconciliation.

The goals of different international policies, such as the global education agenda (focused on education for all), may not match with the specific needs of conflict-affected societies requiring interventions that prioritise minorities or work for societal change. Imbalances of power between international and local actors can also lead to tensions in national policy formulation and programme implementation. Those developing programmes for stability should begin with a thorough conflict and situational analysis and a deep understanding of context.

¹ Bush, K. D., & Saltarelli, D. (2000). *The two faces of education in ethnic conflict: towards a peacebuilding education for children* (Innocenti Insights no. 4). Retrieved from Unicef Innocenti Research Centre website: <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/269-the-two-faces-of-education-in-ethnic-conflict-towards-a-peacebuilding-education-for.html>

² Østby, G., Urdal, H., & Dupuy, K. (2019). Does education lead to pacification? A systematic review of statistical studies on education and political violence. *Review of Educational Research*, 89(1), 46–92. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654318800236>

What do we mean by “building stability”?

DFID understands stability as a condition that goes much further than the mere absence of violence. Their Building Stability Framework (2016) acknowledges that a development agenda in itself is insufficient and that fundamentally, it is about communities, states and regions being able to manage conflict and developmental change peacefully over the long term. In this way, it is a positive vision of peace.

This raises the question of how countries might best expand educational opportunities in order to reduce instability. Countries with overall higher levels of educational attainment tend to be more stable and there are links between education, youth agency, employment and peacebuilding, but these are not clearly understood. While educational attainment tends to increase the opportunity cost of young people joining conflict, young people can also mobilise through educational institutions for increased conflict and resistance, and those in employment and education are not exempt from engaging in conflict activity.³ A mismatch between expectations and reality will exacerbate conflict and youth bulges and large numbers of educated young people can lead to high unemployment or the inability to find meaningful work. However, increasing budgets for education is not enough to make a positive difference, and the quality and content of a national education programme needs to be responsive to context and local market needs.

What is conflict sensitive education?

DFID understands a conflict sensitive approach to involve:

[...] gaining a sound understanding of the two-way interaction between activities and context and acting to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts of interventions⁴

and

[ensuring] that design, implementation and outcomes of interventions do not undermine peace or exacerbate conflict, and contribute to peace where possible (within the given priorities)⁵

Smith⁶ and Davies⁷ also refer to the importance of conflict analysis and a clear understanding of context in order to create a conflict sensitive system of

education. Conflict sensitivity is described as a set of processes that help recognise the unintended (positive and negative) contribution of all programmes and projects, assessing how programming interacts with the conflict and the opportunities for peace, and revising programming accordingly.

Aspects of education that could make a positive difference to the dynamics of conflict include transparency and accountability in the governance of education, service delivery and broader social transformation processes that take account of the structures, content and processes of national education. Complete sector reform would include training in education governance, rewriting of curricula and textbooks, consideration of dominant and excluded languages, training of teachers in managing difference, and the integration of minorities along with returning and former soldiers. Politicisation and indoctrination can be mitigated by partial devolution of particular aspects of policy making or service delivery. Creating local councils, with parental or local political participation in consultation, decision making and school management are all important ways to share power between diverse interest groups in ways that contribute towards peacebuilding. Conflict sensitive teacher recruitment and teacher education trains teachers in imparting values, tolerance and diversity, and creating positive socialisation processes and role models.

The four Rs

Novelli, Lopes Cardozo and Smith's⁸ theoretical framework could provide a valuable indicator for priority issues in DFID programming work. The four Rs are:

- > Redistribution (addressing inequalities)
- > Recognition (respecting difference)
- > Representation (ensuring participation)
- > Reconciliation (dealing with past, present and future injustices)

These four areas are worth looking at separately, whilst also acknowledging their links and reinforcing nature, and how any contribution toward lasting stability involves a combination of them.

³ Lopes Cardozo, M. T. A., & Scotto, G. (2017). *Youth, peacebuilding and the role of education* (INEE/YPS Thematic Paper). Retrieved from the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) website: <https://inee.org/resources/youth-peacebuilding-and-role-education>; Oosterom, M. A. (2018). *Youth employment & citizenship: problematising theories of change* (K4D Emerging Issues Report). Retrieved from Institute of Development Studies website: <https://www.ids.ac.uk/publications/youth-employment-citizenship-problematising-theories-of-change-2/>; Millican, J. (Ed.) (2017). *Universities and conflict: the role of higher education in peacebuilding and resistance*. London: Routledge.

⁴ Brown, S., Goldwyn, R., Groenewald, H., & McGregor, J. (2009). *Conflict sensitivity consortium benchmarking paper* (Working draft paper) as cited in R. Goldwin & D. Chigas (2013). *Monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity: methodological challenges and practical solutions*, p. 8. Retrieved from the Care International website: <https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/publications/monitoring-and-evaluating-conflict-sensitivity-methodological-challenges-and-practical-solutions>

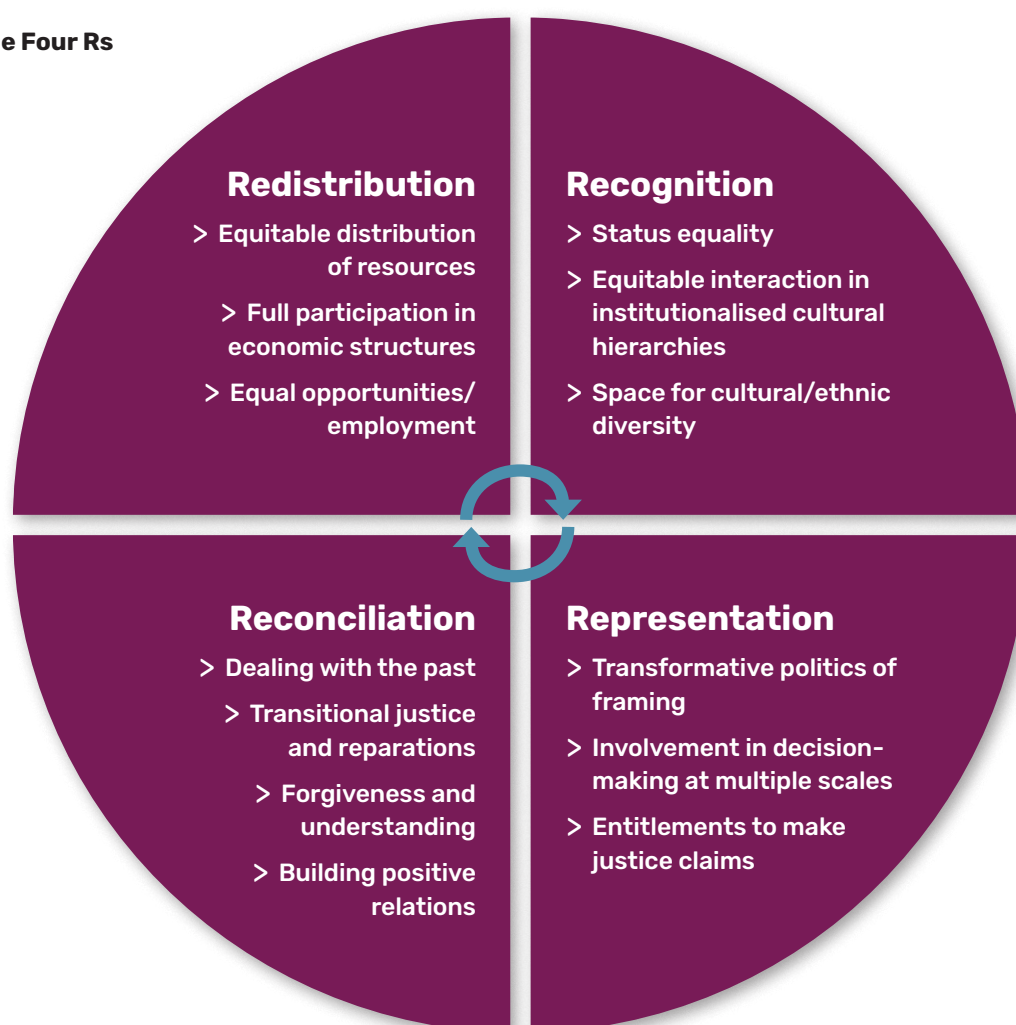
⁵ Goldwin & Chigas, *Monitoring and evaluating conflict sensitivity*, 10.

⁶ Smith, A. (2010). *The influence of education on conflict and peace building* (Report 2011/ED/EFA/MRT/PI/48). Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011: The hidden crisis: armed conflict and education. Retrieved from the UNESCO website: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000191341>.

⁷ Davies, L. (2004). *Education and conflict: complexity and chaos*. New York, NY: Routledge.

⁸ Novelli, M., Lopes Cardozo, M. T. A., & Smith, A. (2015). *A theoretical framework for analysing the contribution of education to sustainable peacebuilding: 4Rs in conflict-affected contexts* (Working Paper). Retrieved from the Education and Development, University of Amsterdam website: <https://educationanddevelopment.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/theoretical-framework-jan15.pdf>

Figure 1 The Four Rs



Source: Novelli, Lopes Cardozo, and Smith, 2015.⁹

Redistribution involves addressing the unequal distribution of resources and participation in education that can lead to lack of health, employment opportunities and life chances. Inequality can be understood as vertical inequality between individuals or systematic (horizontal) inequalities between ethnic, linguistic, religious, or regional groups. While both can contribute to conflict, it is the latter that is more significant in civil or state instability. Since the early 2000s, educational inequality between ethnic and religious conflict has been a far greater factor than regional inequalities, possibly due to the rise of education globally and policies on “education for all” leading to education having a bigger impact on future life chances. Unrest caused by inequality seems to be related less to overall numbers enrolled and spending allocated, and more with how opportunities are distributed. Discrimination in Rwanda towards Tutsi in the educational system, and prioritisation of colonial curricula in South Africa, are both examples of how horizontal inequalities contributed to violent conflict in resistance to the perpetuation of dominance and control.

Gender is also a significant factor and gender equality in education can indirectly lead to peace through the promotion of development and good governance.¹⁰ While policy makers often stress the importance of providing educational opportunities for young men to prevent conflict, inclusion of women in education systems tends to lead to more tolerant and peaceful societies generally.

Indicators of equal distribution could include a quantitative analysis of existing data for vertical and horizontal inequalities relevant to education inputs, resources and outcomes, or the analysis of macro education reforms such as the impact of decentralisation and privatisation, and to ascertain how they impact different groups and affect conflict dynamics.

Recognition entails addressing status inequalities that prevent some people from equal or full interaction in social or cultural hierarchies, due to cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial, gender, or age factors, etc. Positive interventions could include changing the language of instruction, looking at ways in which diversity is taught in the curriculum, and the development of policies on citizenship.

⁹ Ibid, 13. © 2015 University of Amsterdam. Reproduced under CC BY-NC-ND 3.0. Colours adapted for style.

¹⁰ Bussmann, M. (2010). Political and socio-economic aspects of gender equality and the onset of civil war. *Sicherheit und Frieden/Security and Peace*, 28(1), 6-12. <https://doi.org/10.5771/0175-274x-2010-1-6>

The perpetuation of status inequalities through segregated or divided schooling affects social cohesion, such as in Northern Ireland and Bosnia and Herzegovina post 1994, by emphasising identity differences and status inequalities. Segregating schooling on identity factors such as language, religion and culture is a common feature in conflict-affected countries. There are several examples of initiatives that attempt to introduce inclusive schooling in order to mitigate the development of negative stereotypes. Promotion of mother tongue as the medium of instruction can be the bridge to learning national, official and international languages, while multilingual policies may provide protection against conflict resulting from the exclusion of minorities from education or the use of language to reinforce unequal power relations between groups. Faith-based schools can play a role in promoting positive values of tolerance and respect for difference, whilst also segregating particular groups.

Indicators of levels of status inequalities include language of instruction policies; intentional recognition of cultural diversity and religious identity in curricula; and the use of citizenship classes and civic education to both encompass minority groups and as a means of state-building.

Representation requires an analysis of the levels of transformative politics at global, national, and local levels, and how far this has impact on participation in decision making and agency. Higher educational attainment can reduce the risk of political violence by encouraging political participation and the channelling of conflicts of interest through institutional pathways rather than through the use of violence.¹¹ Civic education and training at all levels in political participation and rights and responsibilities can have a positive impact. In Northern Ireland, the inclusion of Catholics into university during the 1970s is considered a contributing factor to the subsequent social mobility of this group, leading to Catholics in positions of responsibility 20 years' later making a significant contribution to the peace process.¹²

Potential indicators of levels of representation include the extent to which education policy and reforms are produced through participation (local, national, global); analysis of political control and representation through the administration of education; possibilities for devolved school governance, school-based

management, and involvement of teachers, parents, students in decision making; and the extent to which the education system supports fundamental freedoms.

Reconciliation is crucial for stability in (post-)conflict societies in order to prevent a relapse into conflict and deal with the past, historical memory, truth and reparations, transitional justice and processes of forgiving and healing.¹³ It has been shown that where there has been an increase in higher education in the first five years after conflict, the risk of its reoccurrence is significantly reduced. All forms of education can act as a peace dividend and include support for education governance and reform, providing an entry point for conflict transformation and a tool for peacebuilding.¹⁴

Most education programming is not planned in advance from a peacebuilding perspective, but curricula and pedagogy can be developed to include this, by, for example, reviewing the teaching of history, the content and language of textbooks and how different events and facts are presented and taught. South Africa is one example of the complexity in working with such concepts, such as whether "truth" is objective, how apartheid is discussed and the relationship between justice and reconciliation. Germany provides another example of the role played by the reform of history education and textbooks after World War II, and Rwanda an example of the role of education in relation to remembrance and the inclusion of commemorative sites and events for intergenerational learning.

Studies carried out with Israeli-Jewish and Palestinian young people also showed how, despite ongoing violence, participation in integration programmes can lead to positive and tolerant attitudes, a better ability to see the other side's perspective and a greater willingness for contact. However, these changes appear to depend on participants', or their parents', initial political views and such programmes are often reinforcing rather than transformative.

Potential indicators of levels of reconciliation in education include the extent to which historical and contemporary economic, political and cultural injustices are addressed in/through education (e.g. quota systems, school relocation, textbooks, teacher allocation); analysis of how education contributes to

¹¹ Hegre, H. (2003). *Disentangling democracy and development as determinants of armed conflict* (Working Paper). Retrieved from The World Bank website: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEC/Resources/disentangling_democracy_and_development.pdf

¹² Brewer, J. (2017). Queen's University Belfast in times of Violence and Peace. In J. Millican (Ed.), *Universities and conflict: the role of higher education in peacebuilding and resistance*. London: Routledge.

¹³ Novelli, Lopes Cardozo, & Smith, A *A theoretical framework*, 12.

¹⁴ Smith, A., & Ellison, C. (2015). *The integration of education and peacebuilding: a review of the literature* (Research Consortium on Education and Peacebuilding/ University of Ulster research output). Retrieved from Education and Development, University of Amsterdam website: <https://educationanddevelopment.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/integration-of-education-and-peacebuilding.pdf>

integration and segregation, such as social cohesion, shared or separate institutions; teaching about the past and its relevance to the present and future; levels of vertical trust in schools and the education system, and horizontal trust between different identity-based groups.

How can education programming lead to stability?

Education can respond to the immediate impacts of conflict, through the provision of education for refugees or accelerated learning programmes as part of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) in the post-conflict phase, creating temporary stability for these groups at this time. Education can also play a direct role in longer-term development processes, dealing with the legacies of conflict through broader social transformations and sector-wide reforms, or in the early post-conflict period through, for example, the inclusion of human rights education as part of police training or reforms to the administration of justice system.

Education is a means for building citizenship, by modelling the processes and educating the kinds of citizens a state needs: aware of their rights and their responsibilities. Hence, while education is important for stability in a post-conflict phase, it is just as important in preventing conflict from erupting in the first place, or states from relapsing into conflict when grievances are not addressed. Education only leads to stability when equality of access, participation and representation are available for all minority groups and people's expectations from receiving education are

aligned with their future life chances. This entails those supporting education ensuring there is accountability and transparency in governance, and programmes and policies are designed, teachers trained and textbooks published that promote tolerance and diversity and respond to the needs of the employment market and the communities served.

An ongoing tension lies between the humanitarian, development and security sectors, each of which has different priorities and agendas. Some progress has been made in recognising education's role and potential in the humanitarian phase (during and in the immediate aftermath of conflict), but it is still perceived as marginal to the core business of shelter, food and medical attention. Education tends to be viewed as a long-term, non-urgent goal, not a short-term imperative. Coordination and understanding between the sectors are important if one is to support the other.

Schools are key civic institutions, but their impact depends on a range of social and economic measures which shape and influence the experience of people within society. There is no "silver bullet" that guarantees a positive outcome, and any education structure is linked to the particular country and system in which it is based. Educational interventions need to be planned and decided with a specific context in mind, with careful attention to every level of the intervention process, if they are to have a positive impact on security and stability in the longer term.

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